



Arizona Department of Transportation

Public Transportation Division

MEMORANDUM

To: MPO and COG Directors

Date: April 17, 2006

From: Jim Dickey, Director, PTD

Subject: State Public Transportation Update

Hello MPO and COG Directors: Since we last "talked", many things have happened that I wanted to bring you up to date. So here goes:

SB1166 Passed Stopping on State Highways: On Monday, 4/3, SB1166 passed out of the Legislature and was signed by the Governor on 4/7. This LAW creates a new category of conditions that enables public transportation vehicles to stop on state highways to embark/disembark passengers. ADOT, with the help of many of you, will develop an implementation plan for the bill, which becomes effective 90 days after the close of the legislative session. Thanks to the Arizona Transit Association, which worked very hard behind the scenes in developing this law, identifying sponsors, and moving the bill through committee and floor. Contact: Jim Dickey

State Railroad Assessment and Inventory: Using ADOT's on-call list and in a partnership with MAG, the State 2006 Railroad Inventory and Assessment will soon be underway. This will be the baseline for use to develop additional rail plans and studies, and will include analysis of ALL rail infrastructure throughout the state, including condition, utilization, and private party short range improvement plans, along with a GIS database application of crossings, speed limits, and other factors. Proposal was received from two firms on 4/14, of which we will award by 4/26. Target completion is very early 2007. Contact: Marc Pearsall

State Rural Transit Needs Study: In a matching-funds partnership with AzTA, ADOT is undertaking a comprehensive rural transit needs analysis which, by nature, will focus on those areas where more comprehensive system planning is not currently available. Again, using many of you to support this effort as a TAC, we will develop a factual picture of current transit need throughout rural areas and quantify it for the purposes of future planning, implementation, and funding efforts. ADOT is using its on-call list to do this work as well, with a target date of early 2007 for completion. Contact: Jim Dickey

Latest Arizona SAFETEA-LU FY06 Allocations worksheet: Attached, please find the update FY2006 FTA allocations worksheet for SAFETEA-LU. On this update, you will see some detail on the much-discussed JARC and New Freedom Programs and some corrections. Contact: Mark Hoffman

JARC and New Freedom Distributions: As you know, the Job Access and Reverse Commute program is formulized for the first time this year, and the New Freedom initiative - developed by the Bush Administration a few years ago and designed to create new opportunities for disabled travelers' accessibility "beyond the ADA" - finally has funding associated with it. Using a working group of large and small MPO, COG, and designated recipient representatives, ADOT hosted a conference call to discuss the interim guidance for the FY06 distribution of funds in these two categories, knowing now that FTA will have official guidance beginning for FY07. According to law, the large MPOs (MAG and PAG areas) working with their designated recipients, have responsibility to determine the distribution based upon a plan (a JARC plan may already exist, but a New Freedoms plan does not). For the small MPOs and for the rest of the state, it is the responsibility according to FTA for ADOT to develop a distribution plan. Knowing that no specific JARC nor New Freedoms plans currently exist at those levels, ADOT will be working with the small MPOs and COGs to determine a way that an FY06 distribution may happen, or possible awaiting the completion of the planning process and distribution of the FY06 funding with the FY07 cycle. By the way, where might a plan come from? Potentially the State Rural Transit Needs Study and/or the Arizona Rides Program. ADOT-PTD will be contacting you to help decide on a strategy. Contact: Gregg Kiely or Jim Dickey

Arizona Rides: There are several developments in the Arizona Rides program worthy of your note: First, ADOT has applied for two Grants, the first an implementation grant from FTA that we still await funding news. We expect to not be awarded the \$75K full request, but we do expect some funding award. Secondly, ADOT applied for a Governor's Office of Highway Safety grant, in order to facilitate a coordinated rural training effort. Again, no news yet, but we anticipate the best! From a staffing perspective, ADOT-PTD has added two positions, one filled, the other on the edge! Both will support the Arizona Rides effort, along with other miscellaneous ADOT processes. Contact: Gregg Kiely or Jim Dickey

FY07 Legislative Agenda Ideas: It's never too early to begin to think about issues that you may wish for ADOT to frame for consideration for the upcoming FY07 Legislative session. PTD staff has several ideas, and welcome yours, too. Here are some of what we're thinking might be viable legislative issues:

- * Bus Stop advertising on state highways
- * State Infrastructure Bank (Help Loan program) modifications to fund and facilitate transit program loans
- * Reversion of the \$650K RR R/W purchase fund to RR planning (the R/W was specifically identified in the original statute, no longer available)
- * LTAFII improvements including annual guarantees instead of thresholds
- * Fully supported Bus Subsidy program in Non-attainment areas for State employees
- * Trespassing fines for LRT property

LTAFII: Speaking of LTAFII, we will get some initial estimates for the fund balances after the month of April. From that, we may be able to predict IF any distributions may occur based upon this year's threshold amount of \$37M and \$49M cap. Contact: Matt Carpenter

FTA 5310: The FTA 5310 program application process is well underway, and many COGs and MPOs have already received and reviewed applications. Award announcements should become known sometime in May. We hope to award a record amount of money and number of Vans for this application period. This year we are inviting as new participants our Arizona Rides State agency partners as potentially direct recipients in support of statewide coordination. Contact: Gregg Kiely

FTA 5311: Similarly, the FTA 5311 Rural Transportation Program applications are in, and interviews have been completed. Final award recommendations will also be out in May, and IGAs will be delivered very quickly. By the way, I am recommending consideration of multi-year IGAs for the 5311 program, requiring only a funding "addendum" in out years, to streamline that process. The IGA multi-year term will be the same as the SAFETEA-LU authorization. This is a record year! Contact: Sam Chavez

Arizona Roads and Streets Conference: I was happy to see some of you at the annual Arizona Roads and Streets conference in Tucson last week. Multi-modal discussions are becoming more commonplace.

IPG Meetings: A PTD staff attended each of the Intermodal Planning Group meetings held annually in the MPO planning areas. Our attendance at these meetings helps us understand better the planning roles that each MPO is involved in, and specifically, the role of transit in those efforts.

High Speed Rail: ADOT PTD may undertake an effort to "refresh" the 1998 High Speed Rail Study between Phoenix and Tucson. The refreshing would include review of recommended outcomes of the study for current relevance, an update on the costs associated with a connection, and development of collector/distributor plans at each of the planned stops and end-points. I welcome your thoughts on this approach. Contact: Marc Pearsall or Jim Dickey

New Staff: PTD has added two new staff persons and is recruiting for an additional planning position:

- * Training specialist: Dan Harrigan. Dan will be working primarily in the RTAP arena to strengthen the training program we host for section 5311 and 5310. He reports to Sam Chavez
- * Arizona Rides Coordinator: Still unfilled, the position has primarily responsible for Arizona Rides program implementation, and will become a principle in all of the Arizona Rides Working Group, Executive Council, planning and study programs. This position reports to Gregg Kiely
- * Senior Planner: ADOT is currently recruiting for a Senior Planner position, similar to the job responsibilities of Senior Planner Matt Carpenter. The position recruitment will close in early May.

State Management Review: Similar in many ways to the 5307 Triennial Review, ADOT will meet with FTA staff and their Review consultant on August 1-4 to review the program and practices of PTD. The review includes a desk review submittal approximately two weeks ahead of the on-site review. Included in the on-site effort will be review of 19 areas of DOT performance in grant administration of the 5310 and 5311 programs and site-visits to a representative 5310 and 5311 recipient. PTD is now updating its State Management Plan and reviewing the application processes just overhauled for technical corrections, completing several internal processes including procurement reviews, file audits, contracts management, record keeping, and other administrative efforts, which may involve you or recipients in your area. Your help is always appreciated. Contact: Jim Dickey

Statewide Ride Share Data Base: ADOT PTD staff has been working to develop model for a statewide rideshare database in a partnership with Valley Metro and PAG. This effort will expand the current database in Maricopa and Pima counties to a statewide resource, thus allowing anyone who registers to do ride matching with those of similar trip making needs. Look for the program to implemented sometime later this calendar year! Contact: Marc Pearsall

Other planning efforts upcoming: PTD is working on several other planning projects other than those highlighted above. Here's a short list:

- * Maricopa 5311 feasibility and implementation plan
- * Nogales (and surrounding area) 5311 feasibility and implementation plan
- * Queen Creek 5311 feasibility and implementation plan scoping
- * Partnering with TPD on SATS in Pinal, Casa Grande, Benson, Somerton, Douglas, Greenlee County, Queen Creek, and Florence/Coolidge
- * Development of Performance Objectives for 5311 and RTCS projects
- * Implementation of the final of four RTCS projects from Kachina Village to Flagstaff (May target date)

Conferences and Training Update

AzTA Annual Conference, Tempe, 4/26-28

APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference, Anaheim, 4/30-5/3

CTAA Conference, Orlando, June 4-8

5311 Rural Transit Conference (Phoenix) 8/30

The ADOT PTD mission is to identify public transportation needs, and administer programs and resources to provide safe and reliable options for Arizona's communities. With your participation and help, we can do that. Don't hesitate to contact any of the PTD staff for information or direction in regard to your public transportation program needs.